

## CHAPTER 3

### SECTION 9.2

## LITHOTRIPSY

Issue Date: June 3, 1985

Authority: [32 CFR 199.4\(c\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)

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### I. PROCEDURE CODE RANGE

50080-50081 - Percutaneous lithotripsy  
50590 - Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL)  
52337 - Transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy

### II. DESCRIPTION

A. Percutaneous lithotripsy (or nephrolithotomy) is done by ultrasound, or by electrohydraulic or mechanical means. A probe is inserted through an incision in the skin directly over the kidney and applied to the stone. A form of lithotripsy is then used to fragment the stone. Mechanical or electrohydraulic lithotripsy may be used as an alternative or adjunct to ultrasonic lithotripsy.

B. Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL) is a non-invasive method of treating kidney stones using a device called a lithotripter. The lithotripter uses shock waves generated outside of the body to break up upper urinary tract stones; it focuses the shock waves specifically on stones under X-ray visualization, pulverizing them by repeated shocks.

C. Transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy (transurethral nephrolithotomy) involves the insertion of an endoscope using an ascending approach through the urinary tract itself. The stone is then fragmented using either laser, ultrasound electrohydraulic techniques, or mechanical means.

### III. POLICY

A. The following lithotripsy techniques for the treatment of kidney stones are covered.

1. Extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL) for use in the treatment of upper urinary tract stones.

2. Percutaneous lithotripsy (or nephrolithotomy) by ultrasound or by the related techniques of electrohydraulic or mechanical lithotripsy.

3. Transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy (transurethral nephrolithotomy) using either laser, ultrasound, electrohydraulic techniques, or mechanical means.

#### IV. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Any claims or inquiries received regarding payment for percutaneous lithotripsy performed between September 30, 1983 and March 15, 1985 (the previous effective date of coverage for percutaneous lithotripsy), should be referred to:

TRICARE Management Activity  
Office of Appeals and Hearings  
16401 East Centretch Parkway  
Aurora, Colorado 80011-9043

B. Claims processors are not required to research their files for previously denied claims for transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy using laser. If previously denied claims are brought to the attention of the claims processor, the claims processor shall reprocess the claim following the above policy.

#### V. EFFECTIVE DATE

- A. December 19, 1984, for extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL).
- B. September 30, 1983, for percutaneous lithotripsy.
- C. March 5, 1986, for transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy.
- D. July 28, 1987, for transurethral ureteroscopic lithotripsy using laser.

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